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Contemplative Relational Psychotherapy  
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**BEING UNCONSCIOUSLY INFORMED\* ©\*\***

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**I/. UNKNOWING:**

A/. When we interpret we all know we cannot limit ourselves to words of speech. We must dive into the spirit of a living being: into silence, sound, rhythm, harmony, breadth, heart. We discover without words --- we go beyond language, without mind.

Words are only the surface; as a wave is only the surface of the sea, a river, a brook- OR as a ripple is only the surface of a seemingly still pond. We dive into the sea to know the wave; we dive into the ripple of concentric transformations. We feel the current, we are moved by it. We dive, and when we emerge, our language becomes more alive. We undo linguistic fabrication.

We can never claim to know the truth of a person's experience, or give complete expression to it. Only approximations. And that only sometimes.

When we dive into the **Sea of Unknowing** with another human being, we intimately dance inside the fluid of embryonic life, together. We take a big breath - ready or not - we dive - emerge - exhale. A continuous process of inhaling and exhaling. And as we water dance - together - the

current changes, always changing, we/us forever changing. And yet we experience continuity to this aggregate of body-heart-mind and mental formations. How is that?

Concepts surrounding words are not truth. To come closer to the truth of any moment, we dive into the **Sea Of Unknowing**. We get knocked around. A wave carries us to the water's edge. We have experienced something, known a moment, and that moment is already changing before we become aware of it. **Or**, are we in the next moment by then? ((We dive in again. Inhaling - Exhaling. As no two breaths are the same - We can never breathe the same breath twice - nor dive into the same ocean twice.))

I am taking poetic license here to dream words - nonsense at times. To dream passions, desires, evolving truths of myriad moments - or of one present moment - evolving. I play in the many worlds of unthoughts, gestating, pouring out of my belly, out of every pore in my body, out of every organ.

I am the speakers who came before me, they add to my flesh (I am infinity) - holding the pieces of a kalidoscopic self - emerging words. Through my nostrils, through every pore in my body, I breathe words through them, and they through me. We listen from the silent crevices of our being. We breath you, and you breathe us. We are, all altogether, whole.

Walt Whitman said it well:

Do I contradict myself?  
Very well then, I contradict myself  
I am large

I contain multitudes

With a palpable, agonizing quickening of speech,  
A patient says...."Relationships are like theoretical things in my life, and  
there has to be more substance."

I am breathing. My body responds. This echo chamber of a body - a  
canvas of so many life experiences with my patient, many patients. I try  
to witness with non-conceptualizing mind, Beginners Mind, the mind that  
knows no likes or dislikes. And I witness my responses. Reflect on them.  
Responses that are just responses. Responses I many times judge. And at  
other times there is awareness of a deep resonance, a momentary non-  
dualistic, intersubjective resonance, - what I call Transcendent  
Attunement - a moment that is beyond thinking, beyond concepts - just  
awareness - I am my patient for series of 1/4 second moments - no  
separation.

Actually, at an absolute level, there never is separation - just diversity in  
wholeness. In Buddhist practice we have a method to awaken to our true  
nature, our ordinary mind --- beyond our constant ADHD minds. ((From  
Kohut we learn that everyone suffers from a Narcissistic Disorder, from  
Buddhism we learn that everyone suffers from an ADD Disorder)). The  
general term is called **meditation**. We contemplate our conditioned  
existence, our mental formations. We investigate, contemplate paradoxes,  
contradictions, to shake-up our conditioned mind-sets. We **think beyond  
thinking. (Dogen)**

Here is a koan from Suzuki Roshi,

If you think your body and mind are two, that is wrong;

If you think they are one, that is also wrong,  
Our body and mind are both two and one.

We dive deep into **being-becoming**. Into the **spirit-breath** of our patients. Why do we do this? To interpret to our patients what they are, presumably, feeling, thinking or being? **OR**, hopefully, to compassionately and skillfully **guide** them in deepening and widening their capacity to touch, know and reflect on their experience; capacities that have been disabled by anxiety, trauma and fear. And with this deeper, silent knowing - recognize how the mind's attractions and aversions - prevent them/us eclipse their/our natural compassion and wisdom --- toward themselves/ourselves and others.

## IIAs/. **AERIAL VIEW OF ILLUSION**

A/. Freud talked about giving humanity a 3<sup>rd</sup> blow to its narcissism. The first Copernicus and the second, Darwin. Not only are we not the center of the universe but even what determines our responses and behavior are events occurring outside our awareness. Freud's was not the first one to recognize a hidden form of intelligence below the level of awareness - an intelligence "resembling a kind of hidden, auxiliary" ego (Hidden Minds by Frank Tallis).

What was new and radical was the notion of unconscious processing. It was he who established a frame of reference for a systematic dyadic, therapeutic investigation of conscious and unconscious mental life, and their relationship to affect, motivation and behavior.

Beginning with the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century we are learning from the cognitive and neurosciences that our lives are mostly composed of impersonal nonconscious processes. In this composite aggregate of body/mind - the self and consciousness cannot be found nor can it be found in Freud's domain of a personal unconscious mental life - a domain of life and death forces and repressed memories.

Since Freud's time, the understanding of the unconscious has gone through a series of evolutions, if not revolutions. With the advent of phenomenological, relational and intersubjectivity theories, a model of unconscious life becomes more closely related to Buddhist thinking.

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B/. Let's go back 2500 years ago, about 533 b.c. While investigating his own mind, Siddharth Guatama awakened to the ultimate nature of reality. About 100 years later, the western world had the great Greek Philosophers: Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.

Searching to understand the ultimate nature of reality, **a quest for meaning, they recognized there was something more than just the surface of things. To penetrate the surface, they inquired about the hiddenness of knowing. Was there a hidden intelligence? A Universal Mind? The Holy Grail? A latent form of knowing?**

Investigating from gross to subtle levels of consciousness through the five classifications which define the aggregates nama-rupa The Buddha discovered what we think of as a **"self", the atman, - was ultimately nowhere to be found** - it is a mere illusion, a fiction - a science fiction. In every day life, what we call the self is purely a conventional designation for communication. Mind creates what we claim is reality. **The path**

**which leads us to liberation, to the fullness and potentials of emptiness** is through introspection and contemplation.

The Buddha said: “all phenomena are preceded by mind, issue forth from the mind, and consist of the mind.” (Dhamapada) The Buddhist position does not refute conventional reality - Nor does it claim that the mind creates the universe. **It simply implies that mind misperceives the true nature of reality. It confuses a mental image, a sign of something with its reality.**

In the “**Parable of the Cave**”, Plato “illustrated the difference between authentic knowledge of reality and the illusion of appearances.” (The Passion of the Western Mind by Richard Tarnas) We act as prisoners in a cave facing a wall with a light casting shadows from a distance. We mistake these shadows as real, when they are merely shadows with no essence. Only when we free ourselves from our own self-imposed chains, leave the cave and emerge into the light can we glimpse true reality. This luminous light of reality so dazzles our senses we doubt its reality. It is at times painful to recognize our ignorance.

In Buddhist practice, when one has a glimpse of a moment of ultimate reality, or in psychotherapy, when one has a glimpse of deeply meaningful evolving truths, one recognizes s/he cannot turn back to the cave for long. When in this dark cave we view reality through ever evolving shadows of self-and other/environmental ego distortions. **When we allow ourselves to experientially unfold into the purity of knowing** - that is - **without memory, desire and understanding**, we are gaining insight and are growing up.

**Outside the cave is conventional, relative reality. From the Buddhist position, this too is empty; that is to say it lacks self-existence.**

**It is said that “an ordinary man takes the conventional for the ultimate; a sage can discern the conventional within the ultimate.”**  
(Treatise of Bodhidharma in Double Exposure by Bernard Faure).

### **III/. LATENT AND MANIFEST CONSCIOUSNESS:**

A/. For obvious reasons it would be well past the scope of this presentation to give you even a brief-mini- summary of the verbal and written transmission of the ideas in Buddhist Psychology on the notions of mind, self and consciousness.

Instead, I will give you **a few highlights**, from a Buddhist position –how it views the continuum **of consciousness**. I do this in order to extrapolate what this view may contribute to our work as psychoanalysts and psychoanalytically informed psychotherapists.

#### **B/. IS THERE CORRESPONDENCE IN BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY TO THE WESTERN CONCEPT OF THE UNCONSCIOUS?**

In the western psychological sense, **consciousness as an emergent process, develops reflectivity** along with the ability to communicate through language, speech and thought.

This **process of reflection monitors and metacomments** on our ideocentric “stream of consciousness” flow and communicates with an

**unarticulated, unsymbolized affectively tinged unconscious relational field.**

In contrast to using the term unconscious, Buddhism speaks of Manifest and Latent states of consciousness and makes distinctions on a continuum from gross to subtle levels.

**Ordinary states of Consciousness always includes subject and object, self and other, inside and outside; pre-reflectively and reflectively oscillating in “context-sensitive and context-dependent” (Stolorow, et. al., World Horizons) fields of mind creations; mostly deluded in thinking mind it is isolated. Consciousness also has three parts: perceiver, perceived and wholeness. They too are empty.**

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**In the Buddhist sense, when one speaks of consciousness, one is referring to self and other at the same time; subject and object at the same time; perceiver and perceived at the same time. They are an interdependent, co-arising unity.**

**One of my favorite poems, by Thich Nhat Hahn, describes this unity. And I try to apply this principle form of unity when I do psychoanalysis or psychotherapy.**

**CALL MY BY MY TRUE NAMES**

*Do not say that I'll depart tomorrow  
Because even today I still arrive.*

*Look deeply; I arrive in every second  
To be a bud on a spring branch,  
To be a tiny bird, with wings still fragile,  
Learning to sing in my new nest,  
To be a caterpillar in the heart of a flower,  
To be a jewel hiding itself in a stone*

*I still arrive, in order to laugh and to cry  
In order to fear and to hope  
The rhythm of my heart is the birth and  
Death of all that are alive*

*... ..*

*I am a child in Uganda, all skin and bones,  
My legs as thin as bamboo sticks,  
And I am the arms merchant, selling deadly weapons to  
Uganda.*

*I am the twelve-year-old girl, refugee on a small boat,  
Who throws herself into the ocean after being raped by a sea  
Pirate,  
And I am the pirate, my heart not yet capable of seeing and  
Loving.*

*I am a member of the politburo, with plenty of power in my  
Hands,  
And I am the man who has to pay his "debt of blood" to, my people,  
Dying slowly in a force labor camp.*

*My joy is like spring, so warm it makes flowers bloom in all*

*Walks of life.*

*My pain is like a river of tears, so full it fills the four oceans*

*Please call me by my true names,*

*So I can hear all my cries and laughs at once,*

*So I can see that my joy and pain are one.*

*Please call me by my true names,*

*So I can wake up*

*And so the door of my heart can be left open,*

*The door of compassion*

Thich Nhat Hanh heard about a 12 year old girl who threw herself  
drowned herself in the ocean after

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According to one school of thought (**Manifestation Only: Thich Nhat Hahn: Transformation At The Base**)

**our minds have 3 Modes of Perception:**

1. **Direct**
2. **Inference or deduction**, which may be either correct or incurred
3. **Eroneous**

**And Eight (8) “Consciousnesses:”** the first are based in the 5 physical senses - **sensory consciousness-** (which are connected with perception)

“ 1. **eyes see form;**

2. **Ears hear sound;**

3. **Nose smells an odor;**

4. **Tongue tastes something;**

5. **Skin touches an object;**

6. **Mind: consciousness** arises when mind contacts an object of perception; the sub or unconscious

7. **Manas: part of consciousness that gives rise to and connects all the 6 sense consciousnesses. ‘In its broadest sense, it means mental**

**faculties and activities – the intellectual functions of consciousness.**  
(Shambala Buddhist Dictionary).

**Manas arise from store consciousness**, (*cfa- don't worry we'll get to this*) and takes a tiny part (*cfa- an element*) of store consciousness to be the object of" attachment/attraction. It then regards any tiny part as a separate entity, a self, to cling to. These are called "habit energies" of "delusions and craving and come together and create ... the source of energy that conditions our actions, speech and thinking.

**The function of manas is thinking, measuring, conserving and grasping.**

**The nature of manas is continuous. It functions day and night without stopping.**

The grip of manas is the energy that brings about the manifestations of seeds as mental formations in our conscious mind". These

elements of manas we can consider are aspects of the personal unconscious. All that we have ever known with our five senses can be consider.

These manas are considered "the basis for all mental functions and acts as a controller of the five bases...

In its broadest sense manas means mental faculties.

What seems like sharp disagreements simply reflect different metaphors employed to point to the underlying reality which is understood to be ungraspable and inexpressible by the discursive mind.

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